



State Representative Doug Ericksen

401 John. L O'Brien Building
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
360-786-7980

ericksen_do@leg.wa.gov

For more information about the
issues I'm working on, visit my website
at [http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/
ericksen.htm](http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/ericksen.htm)

Rep. Doug Ericksen
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing

42nd District 2004 Session Wrap-Up

From Representative Doug Ericksen

Spring 2004

Dear Friends,

The 2004 session ended March 11. Although the session was a short one, only 60 days, I was pleased to have addressed many of the issues I had identified as priorities when the session began in January:

- provide tax relief for aluminum smelters in Washington
- fix our transportation infrastructure
- keep our commitment to education and
- hold the line on government spending

While I am proud of the progress we made, more work remains to be done. This newsletter provides you with an overview of the issues I'm working on.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns. I'm always happy to hear your thoughts and ideas.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your state representative.

Sincerely,

Doug Ericksen
State Representative
42nd Legislative District

It's easy to stay informed!

Information about legislative issues is as close as your keyboard. There are plenty of ways to get involved and stay informed on issues important to you.

I would be happy to speak to your group, organization or school.

Topics might include:

- Issues before the Legislature
- How does the legislative process work?
- What it's like to be a legislator
- Issues specific to the 42nd Legislative District

Ask for assistance. Legislators are elected to serve you. If you are facing challenges working with a state agency, contact me to see if I can help.

Interim Committee Work:

- Legislative Transportation Committee Executive Board
- TPEAC - Transportation Permit Efficiency & Accountability Committee
- Legislative Ethics Board
- Transportation Performance Audit Review Board

42nd District 2004 Session Wrap-Up

2004 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Saving Alcoa Intalco jobs

One of my top priorities was to keep the Alcoa Intalco aluminum smelter in Whatcom County going. A broad bipartisan coalition of state and local lawmakers passed legislation to provide temporary tax relief for aluminum smelters in our state. **Senate Bill 6304** will allow Alcoa to identify a long-term source of lower-cost electricity in order to keep jobs in our community.

The short-term tax incentives in SB 6304 are only one piece of the puzzle. We still need to lock in a permanent electricity rate reduction from the BPA and remove burdensome regulations which have hindered all of Washington's job providers.

Transportation budget will fix Whatcom County roads

As lead Republican member of the House Transportation Committee my focus was on fixing our region's infrastructure for Whatcom County citizens. I worked to ensure the Guide Meridian project is not only on track, but will be completed

by 2009! Whatcom County citizens can look forward to a safer, less congested road in the near future.

In addition, by identifying and implementing efficiencies within the Washington Department of Transportation, we were able to fund \$20 million in additional projects without raising taxes.

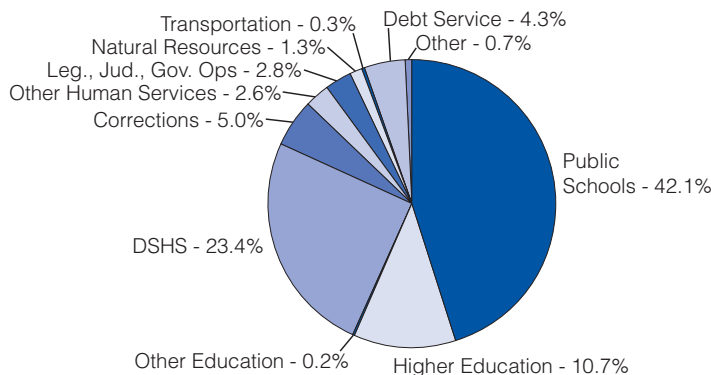
Education improvements

Students graduating beginning with the class of 2008 must pass the Washington Assessment of Student Learning exam. Formerly, students only had one chance to pass the WASL and earn their diploma. The stakes are high, and failure rates have been alarming. **House Bill 2195**, which became law, will allow students up to four chances to retake the test and permits alternative testing methods for students who don't do well on paper tests. The changes made this session will help prepare our students to be successful, as we debate the long-term future of the WASL.

Parents and students should have a variety of educational options available to them. **House Bill 2295**, which was passed into law, will allow five charter schools to be established each of the next three years.

Where your tax dollars go

Near General Fund-State Expenditures 2003-05 Biennium - 2004 Supplemental



2004 BUDGET FACTS

- Increases general-fund spending from \$22.5 billion to \$23 billion, a 3% increase from 01-03 biennium.
- Increases investments in K-12 public schools from \$10.2 billion in the 01-03 biennium to \$10.6 billion in the 03-05 biennium.
- Leaves reserves of \$278 million – about 1.2 percent of total revenues.
- Leaves the state with a projected \$1 billion budget shortfall in 2005.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Health Care Reform

Many working families can't get health care coverage because it's too expensive for their employers. Washington's percentage of uninsured has risen to nearly 17 percent, due in part to excessive government rules that tell health insurers what they must put in their health plans. Large jury awards and settlements have led to skyrocketing insurance premiums. This harms all of us as consumers by preventing access to affordable health care, increasing the cost of housing, and hurting our economy.

I continue to believe the Legislature must protect access to health care by putting the needs of families first. My Republican colleagues and I introduced legislation to reduce costly government mandates and improve access to more-afford-

able health care services for Washington families. Unfortunately, meaningful improvements didn't pass this session. Next session will allow 105 days to roll up our sleeves and work on this critical issue. I am committed to improving access to health care by putting the needs of families first.

Helping small businesses prosper in Washington

Small businesses are the backbone of our state's economy with 76 percent of Washingtonians working for small businesses. The 2003 session focused on creating a healthy business environment for the aerospace industry. Now it's time to apply the "Boeing model" on small business. The model for creating a better economy is very straightforward: cut taxes and provide regulatory relief to create a more business-friendly environment.